

# MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of March 6, 2013 was called to order at 7:03 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

## I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair (CC) Kevin Sullivan, Commissioner (C) Block  
C Bortoli, Youth Commissioner (YC) Bartee, C Wong

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: YC Zakeri, C Wright, and C Eric Sullivan

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais and Secretary Saggau

## **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*C Wong moved, seconded by C Bortoli, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 6, 2013. Vote 5-0 in favor.*

### **III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

PRD Gervais announced upcoming events:

- Egg Adventure Hunt on Saturday, March 30 at Twin Pines Park
- Earth Day events on Saturday, April 20
- Bike Rodeo on May 4 at Barrett Community Center – funded by San Mateo County School District - Safe Routes to School Program
- Parks & Recreation Department staff will be at the Farmer’s Market on Sunday, May 5 to promote summer programs.

CC Kevin Sullivan noted the Food Trucks are a new community event on Monday nights.

#### **IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS**

None.

## V. OLD BUSINESS

**a. Barrett Community Center Update on Facility Improvements, Activities, and Planning**

PRD Gervais described improvements at the Barrett Community Center which included:

- Barrett Community Center sign repaired
- Couple classrooms have been remodeled

- Two diseased Monterey Pines were removed
- Old bathroom was remodeled and changed into an office for the Dance Program
- Increase in programs on Wednesdays for students to drop in
- Classrooms improved for upcoming summer camp programs.
- Rebuilding Together will provide volunteers to paint the exterior of Barrett on April 27.
- Lighting and alarm system have been improved
- Wi-Fi is now at the facility

PRD Gervais reviewed future goals for Barrett:

- Maintain 10 art studios
- Maintain Preschool Program
- Paint exterior walls
- Improve courtyard by creating a picnic area and lawn
- Improve security by blocking off west end and installing breezeway gates
- Redoing restroom and making it a ADA accessible family restroom
- Paint interior of multi-purpose room
- Slurry seal parking lots
- Update door locks
- Remove some interior walls and reclaim classroom size space
- Install signboard on Ralston Avenue

PRD Gervais noted projects that may be too costly to do include upgrading the electrical system, replacing the roof, and installing a heating system in the two wings that do not have heat.

PRD Gervais said current plans for Barrett include increasing drop in programs for teens, increasing theatre, art and music programs and providing a center for summer camps. The long term goal is to identify what the community wants in order to create a plan for Barrett Community Center.

PRD Gervais responded to Commission questions:

- There is evidence of activities occurring at the site at night. The preschool was broken into once and there was evidence of an attempted break in of an artist studio.
- The Building Inspector reviewed the site. Most of the asbestos issues have been taken care of. There is chipping paint on the wood that may contain lead. The seismic hazard at the site is unknown.
- The paint color for the Barrett exterior will be neutral beige.
- Staff will be completing the courtyard improvements.
- Barrett Community Center area is five acres.
- Building is safe for programs.
- Staff has not heard complaints from neighbors on Barrett activities
- Fire danger has been reduced with modifications made and detectors are being installed in classrooms used.
- Number of parking spaces at Barrett is unknown but staff will check and report back.
- Staff expects listed improvements can be accomplished.
- Lighting improvements were completed in both the exterior and interior.
- Rent previously received from the 1870 Art Center was \$72,000/year
- Rebuilding Together's goal includes painting the interior of the multi-purpose room.

- Funds were budgeted for the planned improvement projects.

Lucy del Cardayre spoke in favor of installing a volleyball court at Barrett. She would also like more swings installed and a lacrosse goal. She questioned if the multi-purpose room could be used for various sports during inclement weather in winter.

Mike Peterson expressed appreciation for Rebuilding Together and encouraged having good public relations with them. He spoke in support of having an electronic billboard on Ralston Avenue to get more visibility. He noted 15-20 years is a long time and suggested trying to move a project along faster.

Mike Verdone – noted a lot of traffic goes onto Belburn Drive which relieves Ralston Avenue. He questioned if the \$4,000 for gates would stop youths from drinking in the area and if they would leave litter elsewhere.

C Wong stated he appreciates the concerns for Barrett and noted the field and garden should be included when prioritizing improvements.

C Bortoli expressed appreciation that some things are going on at Barrett. He stated in the past the Commission was concerned about getting the community excited about a project without any funds to complete it. He noted the bike bridge project has shown that when there is a plan sometimes the funds become available.

C Block stated there is movement at Barrett and expressed support for using cost effective measures to temporize the facility and get the best possible use for the community. He added it is important to create awareness for the Center as most people do not know about it.

CC Kevin Sullivan noted it is important to find small things to make Barrett more useable. He expressed support for the idea of a volleyball court and lacrosse. He suggested having a community volunteer group complete the improvements in the courtyard. He said he would like to keep an electronic signboard in consideration. He commented it is time to get moving with creating a plan for Barrett.

C Wong commented that if the plan is to go for a total demolition and replacement it is much higher wall to overcome. Ways of drawing interest and awareness of the facility could be done by having the Food Trucks alternate sites or having Carlmont Shopping Center expand National Night Out into Barrett.

CC Kevin Sullivan agreed a lot of people are not aware of Barrett Community Center and what it includes. He questioned if the Commission would like to create an Ad-Hoc Committee for Barrett. PRD Gervais agreed it would be good idea to brainstorm on what is needed at this facility. He noted the Department could meet with a group to stay on this project but the community needs to discuss what it wants.

Following discussion it was decided to consider creating an Ad-Hoc Committee for Barrett and assigning members when the Commission reorganizes at their next meeting in April.

**b. Results of the Community Survey Concerning Recreational Opportunities in Belmont**

PRD Gervais reported on the results of the community survey. The following was noted:

- Majority of responders were female but there was a 10% increase in male responses compared to the previous survey
- Most responders were Belmont residents
- Half had not visited the Barrett Community Center
- Lot of people support an indoor pool but also a good percentage did not want it.
- Skateboard park did not have much support
- Fitness Center received high ratings

Comments received in the survey noted the following:

- Dogs are an issue at Barrett and needs to be discussed.
- There is a need for activities for teens

PRD Gervais responded to Commission questions:

- Cipriani Dog Park is well used consistently but not overcrowded
- Survey analysis had not yet been presented to the City Council
- Staff will check if the survey provides the ability to filter out specific responses
- A few paper surveys were completed and included
- Received almost 700 responses which is a good result

Mike Davis stated he was pleased with survey and suggested that a summary and news release be done so that the public knows the survey results. In addition he requested that it be explained that the theatre and swimming pool at Carlmont High School are not available to the community. He agreed that an electric signboard would make sense at Barrett.

Lucy del Cardayre commented that communication in Belmont is limited without a town newspaper. She suggested that the City put out an electronic newsletter similar to what San Carlos sends out and advertise it on the banners that cross Ralston Avenue. She was also in favor of an electronic signboard at Barrett. She spoke in favor of designating more places for off-leash dog activity like the programs available in the cities of San Mateo and San Carlos.

PRD Gervais explained there is a City Manager's report available for anyone that would like to sign up for it through the City's website.

C Block expressed appreciation for the comments on ways to increase communication and expanding email lists. He suggested looking at additional ways to increase these lists.

C Bortoli agreed that a news release on the survey results was a good idea. He noted that previous surveys received more responses from moms that sign up for classes and that there was an attempt to broaden the spectra of people. Regarding dogs at Barrett he noted it may be popular because the neighborhood can easily walk to it and it is visible and thought that other school sites may also have dog walkers but they are less visible.

YC Bartee said he was happy with the survey results and amount of feedback. He agreed the newsletter should be made more available and more well known.

C Wong noted there were a lot of negative comments concerning Barrett and that there were a lot of comments, both pro and con, about dogs at Barrett and that needs to be addressed. He said that there are a lot of municipal pools within a short distance of Belmont. He suggested a future survey get more details on a pool and if people are willing to pay a fee for it or passing a bond. He noted many cities are closing their municipal pools due to maintenance costs. He agreed that there is a lot of value to a pool but the fiscal impact needs to be considered. He proposed that the survey topics be organized in order to prioritize them. He suggested using Next Door be used as a means for communication

CC Kevin Sullivan said the survey was not very clear and a challenge will be to find consensus on Barrett space. He agreed the dog issue at Barrett needs to be addressed. He stated the City does need to put some effort into increasing communication with the public.

C Wong commented that the survey was great and that the open-ended question at the end was more telling on what people want. He agreed it would be nice to see a survey with the different demographics to see the different perspectives for each age group.

C Block noted the survey respondents were more parents and low on teens and that the youths are the ones who will be served at Barrett. He questioned if the next survey could have better outreach to the younger community.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### **A. Questions and Comments**

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- Twin Pines Senior/Community Center Improvement Project will be on the City Council agenda on April 9.
- Trail maps have been revised with language added on trail etiquette.
- The Summer Activity Guide will include a request for donations for Davey Glen Park.
- The Wakefield Park neighborhood expressed concern with the comment from a previous meeting mentioning a remote alternative of selling the park property. PRD Gervais will attend their next neighborhood association meeting.
- The Commission Appreciation Dinner would be held on Monday, March 11.
- Commissioners were reminded that they need to complete their Form 700.
- Good trail work was completed at the last Volunteer Trail Work day.

### **B. Future Agenda Items**

Status on Davey Glen Park  
Barrett Ad-Hoc Committee  
Belmont Sports Complex Turf Project  
O'Donnell Park Community Garden  
Commission Reorganization

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

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Jonathan Gervais  
Parks & Recreation Director